

# DEVELOPING A POLICY TO PROTECT WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN AREAS ***PHASE1***

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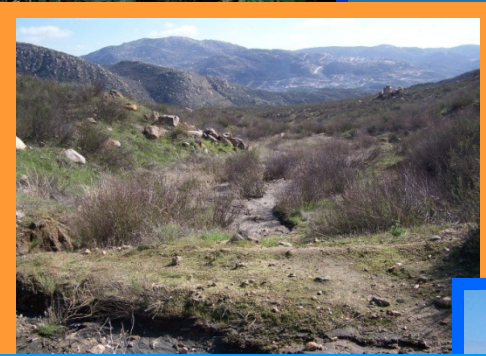
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# Why We Need a New Policy

- No consistent statewide policy exists
- Water Boards are required to protect ALL “waters of the state”
- Federal protection extends only to “waters of the U.S.,” a shrinking category
- Wetlands developed as compensatory mitigation are losing functionality at an increasing rate

# What is at risk without clear policy guidance?

Loss of these vulnerable wetlands / riparian areas and associated benefits



# Recent State Board Actions

- Resolution No. 2008-0026 authorizing 3-phase State Board Policy project
- Resolution No. 2008-0030 “Requiring Sustainable Water Resources Management” in all “policies, guidelines, and regulatory actions”

# Policy Phase 1

- Develop a definition of wetlands for California
- Develop a policy to provide protection from dredge and fill activities
- Design a wetland regulatory mechanism with a watershed focus, based on CWA 404(b)(1) Guidelines
- Design wetland assessment method(s) to monitor wetland protection and program effectiveness

# Statewide Wetlands Definition

- Must accomplish mandates of Porter-Cologne and No Net Loss Policy
- Must be broad enough to encompass the state's diverse array of wetlands
- Should be consistent, as far as possible, with other agencies' definitions
- Should use accepted field methods to identify wetland boundaries



# Policy Phase 2

- Expand the policy to protect wetlands from “all other activities impacting water quality”
- Develop new or revised definitions of beneficial uses
- Develop water quality objectives to protect beneficial uses
- Design an implementation program to achieve objectives and protect wetland functions

# Policy Phase 3

- Extend the policy to protect water quality functions of riparian areas
  - Develop new definitions of beneficial uses
  - Develop water quality objectives
  - Design an implementation program to achieve water quality objectives



